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AFGHAN AND IRAQI WOMEN: *Looking to the Future with Renewed Hope*

"The advance of women's rights and the advance of liberty are ultimately inseparable."

—President George W. Bush, March 8, 2004

In the past two and a half years, 50 million men, women, and children in Iraq and Afghanistan have been liberated from two of the most brutal regimes on earth. Twenty-five million women and girls are now free to go to school, vote in elections, and play an active role in their societies.

AFGHANISTAN

Government and Civil Society

- Two of the nine members of the Constitutional Drafting Committee were women.
- The new Cabinet includes two women ministers.
- About 41% of all voters registered for the October 2004 Presidential elections are women.

Women's Centers

- 18 Women's Resource Centers planned throughout Afghanistan will provide vocational training and health services. Each center will have audiovisual equipment, computers, libraries, and a daycare services.

Health

- Immunization campaigns for children and training programs for rural midwives will reduce maternal and child mortality rates.
- Women and girls in rural areas participating in health-related accelerated learning and literacy programs.

Education

- The first group of Fulbright grantees to arrive in the U.S. in 25 years included five women. Four Afghan women judges, six women journalists, and 12 women in government have also traveled to the U.S. for training.
- Job creation projects teach women how to develop and market products such as textiles, rugs, cement blocks, and honey to promote self-sufficiency.

For more information go to
<http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/34808.htm>

IRAQ

Government and Civil Society

- Three women on the Iraqi Governing Council helped draft the Transitional Administrative Law that is a model in its protection of women's human and civil rights.
- The Iraqi cabinet includes six women ministers and seven deputy ministers, and women occupy 25 of the 100 seats on the Iraqi National Council.
- Six women sit on the Baghdad City Council, and 81 women serve on neighborhood and district councils.

Women's Centers

- Newly developed Women's Centers offer computer and literacy classes, job skills, education and training for financial independence, access to information on health care, and legal services. Some centers also offer sanctuary from domestic violence.

Health

- Women's Mobile Teams offer rural women instruction on health issues, domestic violence, crisis intervention, landmine awareness, Islam and democracy, and family-care education.
- U.S. grants will support recruitment and training of hundreds of women nurses.

Education

- Six Iraqi women are among the scholars selected for the 2004 Fulbright Program.

For more information go to
<http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/35165.htm>